PROSPECTUS.

THE STORY

OF THE

Upper Canadian Rebellion.

BY JOHN CHARLES DENT,

Author of "The Last Forty Years," etc.

"We rebelled neither against Her Majesty's person nor her Government, but against Colonial *mis*government. . . . We remonstrated; we were derided. . . . We were goaded on to madness, and were compelled to show we had the spirit of resistance to repel injuries, or to be deemed a captive, degraded and recreant people. We took up arms, not to attack others, but to defend ourselves."—*Letter to Lord Durham, from Dr. Wolfred Nelson and others, confined in the gaol at Montreal, June 18th, 1838.*

THE story of the Upper Canadian Rebellion forms one of the most memorable, and at the same time one of the most instructive chapters in the history of our country. It is the story of an ill-planned and feebly-conducted movement, which never contained within itself the essential elements of success, and which, from a military point of view, ended in ignominous failure and disaster. It was however by no means a *total* failure. It aroused the attention of Imperial legislators to the wrongs sustained by their fellow-subjects in these colonies. It stimulated inquiry, and inquiry led to the recognition of insufferable grievances. This recognition was but the preliminary to substantial redress. The most important

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reforms for which the moderate-minded among the insurgents had contended were ultimately conceded, and the domination of the oligarchy, which had long had its heel upon the neck of Upper Canadian liberty, was brought to an end.

The insurrection, then, though unsuccessful in the field, was triumphant in the senate, and was the means of accelerating reforms which, without its assistance, would certainly have been long delayed.

For various reasons, no accurate or comprehensive account of this significant movement has ever been written. For some years after its close, reproach and ignominy rested upon all who had been concerned in it, and they had thus strong motives for maintaining silence on the subject. As time passed by, and the mists of prejudice began to roll away, one after another of the chief actors in the drama sank into the grave. After the death of Mr. Mackenzie, in 1861, an account of his life was given to the world by his son-in-law, Mr. Charles Lindsey. It necessarily embodied a good deal of matter relating to the rebellion in which Mr. Mackenzie had so large a share. It is a work of much value, and it justly enhanced the literary reputation of its author. But Mr. Lindsey was of course compelled to write from such materials as were before him, and his narrative is mainly founded upon Mr. Mackenzie's own papers. Under such circumstances it was impossible to avoid strong bias. Moreover, since Mr. Lindsey's work was written, much additional light has been thrown upon the subject-matter from various sources, and, in the opinion of all who are entitled to speak with authority on such a question, the time has come when the true story of the Upper Canadian Rebellion should be laid before the public.

Impressed by these well-recognized facts, th author of the present work has undertaken to tell the story in detail. He has for some years past been engaged in collecting material for it, and has accumulated such a mass of facts, letters, pamphlets and documents as are not elsewhere to be found. A few months since he became possessed of the papers and correspondence of the late Hon. John Rolph—a name still fresh in the memory of the people of this Province — whose connection with the affairs of 1837-'38, has always been supposed to have been as intimate as was that of Mr. Mackenzie himself. The nature and extent of that

connection is made sufficiently clear from the correspondence and documents above referred to, which moreover throw a new light upon at least one problem which has hitherto been regarded as insoluble. Conspicuous among the documents is a voluminous paper in the handwriting of Dr. Rolph himself, embodying a review of the facts and circumstances bearing upon the rising near Toronto, and the defeat at Montgomery's. This paper it is proposed to publish in full in the body of the work, with an analysis and notes. The collection as a whole is of the highest value, and a careful digest of it will be included in the "Story of the Upper Canadian Rebellion."

The various sensational episodes arising out of the insurrection are of a character which, at first glance, seem to be better fitted to adorn the pages of romance than the sober pages of history. The Sunday night meeting at Montgomery's; the secret interview on the following day between Mackenzie and the mysterious Executive; the capture and escape of Powell; the shooting and death of Anderson; the extraordinary incidents connected with the Flag of Truce; the flight, arrest and final escape of Dr. Rolph; the affair at Montgomery's; the escape of Mackenzie; the devious and prolonged wanderings of Lount, his capture and final execution; the burning of the *Caroline*—these are merely a few of the thrilling events which the writer will be called upon to describe at full length. They will stand out in bold relief from the mere record of political complications, and will add zest and animation to a narrative which, told even in the barest outline, would be of surpassing interest and power.

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